

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application is respectfully requested. By this Amendment, Applicant has added new claims 26-29. Thus, claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 12-14, 17-22 and 24-29 are now pending in the application. In response to the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims define patentable subject matter.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 12-14, 17-22, 24 and 25 are allowable.

**I. Preliminary Matters**

Claim 12 is objected to because the Examiner maintains that the term “supported” (line 6) should be changed to “supports”. By this Amendment, Applicant has amended claim 12 as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to remove the objection to claim 12.

**II. Prior Art Rejections**

Claims 1 and 9 are now rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by newly cited Yapel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,906,862; hereafter “Yapel”). Claims 2, 3, 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yapel. Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention would not have been anticipated by or rendered obvious in view of Yapel.

Yapel is directed to a method and apparatus for drying coatings on a substrate. As shown in Figure 13, a drying system 190 includes a series of four drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and

198 separated by transitional enclosures 210. The drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 each utilize a low velocity laminar flow of heated drying gas to dry a coated web 206 which is conveyed through drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 by idler rolls 208. The transitional enclosures 210 isolate the drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 to minimize the exchange of drying gases therebetween or the exchange of drying gases with ambient air. The drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 may utilize progressively greater velocity air flows and progressively higher temperatures of the drying gas to dry the coated web 206.

With regard to independent claim 1, the Examiner asserts that the claimed steps of “drying the photosensitive coated layer by a first heating means” and “heating the support and the photosensitive coated layer by a second heating means ...” read on Yapel’s drying enclosures subjecting the web to heated drying gases. The Examiner further asserts that the claimed step of “changing a condition of heating of the second heating means while the support is being conveyed” reads on Yapel’s teaching that the temperature of the drying gas may progressively increase as the coated web moves through the drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 (column 13, lines 57-67).

Accordingly, the Examiner appears to be taking the position that each of the drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198 is a heating means, wherein the drying enclosure 196 corresponds to the claimed first heating means which dries the coated layer to a dry-to-touch state and the drying enclosure 198 corresponds to the second heating means provided at a downstream side of the first heating means which heats the support and coated layer<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The drying enclosure 196 necessarily corresponds the claimed first heating means and the drying enclosure 198 (and/or other drying enclosures downstream from the drying enclosure 196) necessarily ... (footnote continued)

However, nowhere does Yapel teach or suggest changing a condition of the drying enclosure (second heating means) 198 while the web (support) is being conveyed. Rather, the section of Yapel (column 13, lines 57-67) cited by the Examiner simply indicates that the velocity of the air flow and the temperature of the drying gas may progressively increase as the coated web moves through the drying enclosures 192, 194, 196 and 198. That is, the temperature of the drying gas in each of the individual drying devices remains fixed such that the temperature of the drying gases in the downstream drying enclosures is greater than the temperature of the drying gases of the upstream drying enclosures. Thus, Yapel simply teaches that the temperature of the drying gas in the drying enclosure (the second drying means) 198 is greater than the temperature of the drying gas in the drying enclosure (the first drying means) 196 (and the drying enclosures 192 and 194).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1, as well as dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9, should be allowable over Yapel because the cited reference does not teach or suggest all of the features of the claimed invention.

Lastly, Applicant has added new dependent claims 26-29 to claim that the condition of heating of the second heating means is changed while the support is being conveyed based on a detected condition of the support or the photosensitive coated layer while the support is being conveyed. Applicant respectfully submits that it is quite clear that Yapel does not teach or suggest the condition of heating of the second heating means is changed while the support is

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corresponds the claimed second heating means since Yapel discloses that the coated web is dry-to-touch upon entering the drying enclosure 198 (see column 13, lines 59-62).

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being conveyed based on a detected temperature of the photosensitive coated layer and/or a detected change in width of the support.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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WASHINGTON OFFICE

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, page 27, line 24 - page 30, line 10 of the present application.